AVSIM Commercial Aircraft Package Review

Wings of Power's
Republic P-47 Thunderbolt

“Big, Heavy, Tough.”

Product Information		
Publisher: Shockwave Productions		
Description: Add-on aircraft for FS2004		
Download Size: 130 MB	**Format:** Executable File	**Simulation Type:** FS 2004 only
Reviewed by: Joe Mercurio AVSIM Staff Reviewer - date		

Introduction

The P-47 Thunderbolt was without question one of the toughest aircraft to come out of WWII. The P-47 was called upon by the Army Air Corps whenever the dirty work had to be done. Tank killer, train buster, escort fighter, and anti-shipping destroyer, the Thunderbolt could do it all. “Big, Heavy, Tough”, probably the best set of words to describe this mammoth. The P-47 was a very rugged and dependable airplane, and was the largest single seat propeller driven fighter ever built.

The P-47 was very famous for its survivability rate, either in a crash, or just being badly beat-up and still bringing its pilot home safely. In fact, the P-47 is so tough, that on one occasion, it was noted that 4 out of the 28 cylinders were completely destroyed during a mission, and the engine still ran for an hour plus and brought its pilot home.

From the earlier D model, evolving all the way to the N model, a total of 15,677 Thunderbolts were built, more than any other USAAF fighter, exceeding the P-51 Mustang by 291. (According to some sources.)

Installation and Documentation

The Wings of Power (WOP) P-47 is available as a 130MB download for $32.99. The purchase is by credit card and is very simple. Installation is via an installer application (exe).

Before download, all that is required is to put in the username and password you set during purchase. Your download privileges of the P-47 WILL expire in 72 hours after to purchase, so back up your installer! Also, it is highly recommended that you download and install the update to V1.1, which fixes some bugs that I will mention later. You can get the update at Shockwave's website. (15MB)

The read-me included (Acrobat Reader) is full of information, and I recommend reading at least some of it before you jump in and go. It includes many checklists, reference sheets, which include power settings and standard aircraft operating instructions. This package includes the following models:
P-47D22
P-47D25
P-47D30
P-47M
P-47N
XP-72

Visual Model

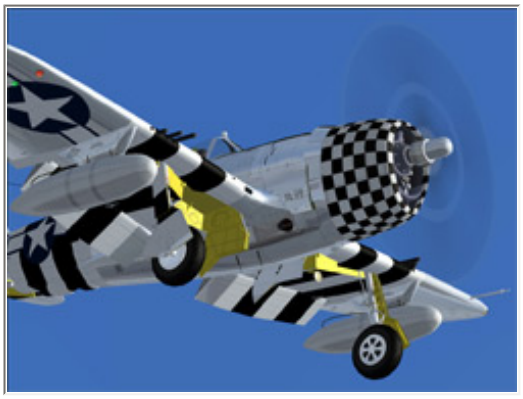
In payware, the visual component of model is very important. Apparently, the Wings of Power team has done it right.

The P-47 offers the top notch visual detail and calls for good frame rates. When you compare other aircraft with the textures on the P47, you find the P47 defiantly has the cleanest, smoothest textures, and is graphic friendly than most others available. With the graphics card I have, it runs without a single jump or hop while switching views. In fact, the detail is so great with the P-47; you can read the text on the wing mounted bombs!

These visual textures have almost no overlapping, (only saw 1 case of this) and offers the best performance of textures available. (Also find many 3rd party paints on the Avsim library!)

"Ready to taxi"

"Banking left over BVY"



"Dirty Config, Final"

Panel and VC

Many people are driven away if the panel on an aircraft isn't done well. The 2D panel in the P-47 isn't what I really expected, but the 'Virtual Cockpit" is truly amazing. I haven't seen a virtual cockpit so readable with so much detail, ever!

Another thing about the VC, it runs very smoothly and works well with active camera. I found this VC to be one of the clearest I've seen in my simming experience, it sticks out over other payware aircraft. You can do everything from the VC, all you need to have is a mouse and a joystick, and you can flip switches and read all the dials, move the levers and more…

"P-47D25 Virtual Cockpit"

The 2D panel in the P-47 runs clear and smooth, but there isn't enough information on it to fly IFR without having to go to the VC. The 2D panel only has an attitude indicator, an airspeed indicator, and a heading indicator (simple). There is no RPM gauge, Manifold pressure gauge, Altimeter, or Vertical speed indicator (VSI) present on the 2D panel, but are all clearly present in the VC. The only thing about the pop up windows (by pressing Shift+2, ect.) that I don't like is the radio stack, its all digital. My wish would be to have the DC-3 looking radio panel, a more old style layout. Overall, there are 3 different panels, according to the year on each model.

"P-47M 2D panel with windows open"

"P-47M 2D panel no windows"

Flight Model

The P-47 is a very heavy aircraft. So to counter this, a very powerful engine is needed, which is also very heavy, making this aircraft nose heavy on landings. We cannot forget this characteristic of the P47. The WOP team did a good job with the P-47's flight model. The aircraft performs right down to the numbers as the real P47's did. In a dive, this aircraft is unbeatable in speed and stability, but in a climb, it was sluggish, and contributed to one of it nick-names, the Jug.

Takeoff is tricky, as you will find in a 2500HP tail-dragger. Make sure you are lined up before you unleash the power of this aircraft, because it's difficult to use rudder once the tail wheel is off the ground. Also, WOP makes their aircraft perform just like they do in real flight, so read the manual to achieve the correct takeoff power setting, as you don't always want to use max power on takeoff. (Takeoff power is a little bit less than max performing power.)

Test System

Win XP Professional
2.6GHZ P4
85GB HDD
1GB RAM
ATI Radeon X850 Pro 256MB
Saitek X52 Joystick Digital Programming Console MFD
CH Pro Pedals
Audigy 2 Soundcard

Flying Time:
17+ hours

After getting airborne, the aircraft will perform nicely at all altitudes, because of the altitude staged supercharger and WEP (War emergency power). I found that without enough speed in a tight turn, the aircraft will stall and sink hard, and it can be difficult to recover. Make sure when performing loops or tight turn, not to "jam" the stick and rudder around, or the aircraft will stall, clean or loaded. When performing acrobatics, make sure you are at a safe altitude so you can dive the aircraft, (what this plane does best) and perform your turns with enough speed. I use about 70% back pressure on my joystick to keep it from stalling, but still keeping a nice turn. The aircraft will bleed your airspeed off fast when you pitch up with no power, just like the real one did. (It's heavy!)

Ok, so you're flying about your local airport, and start to become bored of flying in circles. That's ok! The P47 has an astounding range, if power is trimmed correctly. You can fly the P47 a long way. Its range is over 1500 miles and an altitude ceiling of over 39,000 feet. So go ahead, it's cross country time!

Landing is the most difficult part of flying the P47. If you're full of gas, you're not going to have a fun time getting the P47 on the deck. The engine weights so much, you need more of a speedy approach to be successful. Don't find yourself short of the runway because powering up and climbing out isn't a snap like the P51. I almost always bring my fuel way down to about 30% when I'm just flying about, so I can make an easier landing. Even with the fuel low, landing is still difficult because the nose is long and you can't see over it very well. Make sure your seat is boosted up in the Virtual Cockpit, and don't slip down into the landing configuration until your sure you can make the landing. Once you touch down, I bring up my flaps to prevent the aircraft from jumping up again. And don't worry; the brakes won't flip the plane over unless you use the parking brakes!

Taxiing is done by "swerving" the plane side to side so the pilot can see out the left/right window. If you aren't really a good "taxier" I suggest you use spot view. Use differential brakes to get around tighter turns, but otherwise the aircraft taxi's well. Make sure not to idle too low or the engine will cut after several seconds!

After finishing my final series of flights, I concluded that the P47 will indeed perform like the real aircraft did. The Wings of Power team has always impressed me with the accuracy of their other product's flight model. The WOP

team created different air files for the D,M,N, and XP models, so you will always have a different taste when you pilot a different series of the P47.

Some other payware aircraft I have come across aren't as accurate like this flight model, the WOP team put a good effort in and a very thorough model came out of it. If you read the flight manual, and fly it the way it's meant to be flown, you should have no troubles in piloting this 6 ton, single seat fighter.

Sounds

When I buy payware, especially a war bird, the thing that draws me in is the sound set. I love hearing the old radial engine or inline piston engine rev-up to max power, or just hearing it start-up and choke to life.

The gear and flap sounds are very good, which are hard to come by. Some aircraft come with "737 gear down" and "Cessna flaps", but the WOP team has excellent sounds for these animations. The P-47 has maybe the best warbird R-2800 radial engine sounds I have ever heard. Between starting and shutting down, I sometimes get a chill up my spine as I'm flying about.

These sounds far surpass any other warbird out on the FS market shelves, there is absolutely no apparent "looping" of the sounds and the transition between startup and shutdown are clean. You will not be disappointed, Wings of Power deserves a hand for this sound pack, it is amazing.

Conclusion

The Wings of Power team has done a sensational job on the P-47 Thunderbolt. The team put together a very nice model, texture set, sound set, virtual cockpit, and user manual. The flight manual is very thorough and with all the pictures/diagrams, is easy to find all those buttons you are looking for. Also, the cruising tables cover most of the situations so you can get maximum performance at all altitudes.

The textures are crystal clear, with many different variants. The sounds set may literally blow you away, they are very authentic. And as always, Wings of Power does it again with the clearest Virtual Cockpits available. The only flaw in the model is the inability to choose between load-outs (bombs, rockets, ect.) but I thought it didn't really matter, as this isn't Combat Flight Simulator.

Perhaps, if WOP were to change anything about the P-47, I would have them redo the 2D panel. (Refer to panel section for reasoning) If you are one of the breed of pilots that sets his flightplan into the FMC or GPS, turns on autopilot and does auto landings, this aircraft may not be the best choice for you. This is for the pilots that like to jump in and do a lot of hands on flying.

Yes, it does have autopilot and a GPS, but I try to stay away from them, as the real P-47 didn't. I got my moneys worth out of this product, because I am such a WWII aircraft fanatic, and the WOP P-47 is among the best WWII aircraft to be made for Flight sim, period.

What I Like About The P-47 Thunderbolt
• Outstanding visual detail • Great sounds • Flight model very close to real world numbers (like the P51, accurate.) • It's stability • Flight Manual • Virtual Cockpit very clear and has crisp, readable gauges. (smooth)

What I Don't Like About The P-47 Thunderbolt

- Not able to choose in aircraft select window between load-outs, like bombs and fuel tanks, or rockets...
- Frustrating stall model at times, update V1.1 helps this dramatically.
- 2D panel can be next to useless for people who only use 2D cockpit.
- Difficult to land, you need more of a fast approach.

Printing

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Republic P-47 Thunderbolt

(adobe acrobat required)

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